

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 NSAE-00 NSCE-00
SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10 L-03
PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 AID-05 CEQ-01 SOE-02 COME-00
EB-08 EPA-01 IO-13 NSF-01 OES-07 DOE-15 INT-05
CEA-01 OMB-01 STR-07 TRSE-00 ACDA-12 DOTE-00
FMC-01 CG-00 DLOS-09 /139 W
-----082954 221235Z /11

O R 221222Z MAR 78
FM AMEMBASSY PARIS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8980
INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA
AMEMBASSY ATHENS
AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN
AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE
AMEMBASSY LISBON
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG
AMEMBASSY OSLO
AMEMBASSY OTTAWA
AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK
AMEMBASSY ROME
AMEMBASSY MADRID

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DEPT PASS NOAA, EPA, USCG

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: SENV, FR
SUBJECT: AMOCO CADIZ OIL SPILL

1. BEGIN SUMMARY: PRELIMINARY REPORT ON AMOCO CADIZ
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OIL SPILL OFF BRITTANY, AND USG ACTIONS SO FAR, FOLLOW.
AS OF MORNING MARCH 22, AND ESTIMATED ONE HUNDRED
THOUSAND TONS OF OIL IN SEA AND ONE HUNDRED KILOMETERS
OF THE FRENCH COAST AFFECTED.

2. FROM AMOCO REP AT BREST WE HAVE HEARD THAT THE
AMOCO CADIZ IN APPROACHING FRENCH COAST BEGAN TO HAVE

TROUBLE WITH ITS STEERING GEAR AT 10 AM, THURSDAY, MARCH 16. A DISTRESS SIGNAL WAS SENT OUT IMMEDIATELY ON 500 KILOCYCLE FREQUENCY USED FOR THIS PURPOSE. A TUGBOAT LINE WAS MADE FAST 1330 AND THE LINE BROKE SEVERAL TIMES. AT 2100 CAPTAIN TRIED AND FAILED TO ANCHOR THE VESSEL. AT 0100, 17 MARCH, VESSEL RAN AGROUND ABOUT ONE KILOMETER OFF THE BRITTANY COAST BY PORTSALL. CREW EVACUATED. CAPTAIN LEFT 0535. THE CAPTAIN, A MR. BARBERI OF ITALIAN NATIONALITY, TOGETHER WITH CAPTAIN OF THE TUG (THE PACIFIC OF THE

BUGSIER FIRM) WERE HELD BY THE FRENCH AUTHORITIES UNTIL APPROXIMATELY 2030 MONDAY EVENING, MARCH 20. 80,000 TONS OF PETROLEUM SPILLED INTO THE SEA NEARLY IMMEDIATELY. EXPERTS, AS OF MARCH 22, ESTIMATE SPILLAGE AT 120,000 TONS.

3. GOF PROCEDURES FOR OIL SPILLS INCLUDE DIVIDED AGENCY RESPONSIBILITY. MARITIME PREFECT, WHO IS ALSO IN CHARGE OF ALL COASTAL NAVAL FORCES FOR THE FRENCH ATLANTIC COAST, PERFORMS FUNCTIONS SIMILAR TO THOSE OF THE US COAST GUARD. LAND OPERATIONS ARE UNDER THE JURISDICTION OF THE FRENCH CIVIL DEFENSE ("SECURITE CIVILE) WHICH COORDINATES OPERATIONS AMONG THE FRENCH ARMY, MINISTRY OF EQUIPMENT, MERCHANT MARINE, AND FIRE FIGHTING FORCES. NOT MUCH COORDINATION HAS BEEN LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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OBSERVED BY US EXPERTS ON THE SCENE AT BREST.

4. EPA ADMINISTRATOR COSTLE, ACCOMPANIED BY KENNETH BIGLANE AND EMBOFF, FLEW FROM PARIS SATURDAY,

MARCH 18, MET BRIEFLY WITH VICE ADMIRAL COULANDRE AND WERE THEN EXTENSIVELY BRIEFED BY HIS STAFF. THE THREE OVERFLEW THE AREA IN A US ARMY HELICOPTER. THE OIL WAS OBSERVED TO BE EXTREMELY THICK, EXPECIALLY ALONG THE SHORE LINES AND THE BAY. TWENTY KILOMETERS OF SHORE LINE WERE AFFECTED AT THAT TIME AND THE SPILLED OIL WAS APPROXIMATELY EIGHT KILOMETERS OUT TO SEA.

5. ON SUNDAY, MARCH 19, A TEAM OF NOAA EXPERTS HEADED BY DAVID KENNEDY, INCLUDING EXPERTS IN BEACH DYNAMICS, OCEAN HYDROLOGY AND CHEMISTRY, ARRIVED IN BREST AND MET WITH FRENCH EXPERTS IN CNEXO. ALSO LIEUTENANT DONOHUE, EXECUTIVE OFFICER GULF STRIKE TEAM AND NTSD REP ARRIVED. ALL USG REPS VISITED SITE THAT DAY, BUT VISIBILITY WAS GREATLY IMPEDED BY THE FOG.

6. ON MARCH 20 ADMIRAL COULANDRE RECEIVED REPS OF THESE

US AGENCIES. BIGLANE BRIEFED FRENCH NAVY AT ADMIRAL'S
REQUEST, ON USG PROCEDURES. THE COAST GUARD REP MET
WITH FRENCH EXPERTS IN HIS FIELD.

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CEA-01 OMB-01 STR-07 TRSE-00 ACDA-12 DOTE-00
FMC-01 CG-00 DLOS-09 /139 W
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O R 221222Z MAR 78
FM AMEMBASSY PARIS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8981
INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA
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7. THAT AFTERNOON USG REPS, UK REPS AND FRENCH NAVY
HELD TECHNICAL MEETING. FRENCH DIVIDED ON CONSTRAINTS
ON USE OF DISPERSANTS: 50 METER MINIMUM WATER DEPTH,
APPLICATION ONLY AT OUTGOING TIDE. UK LEFT DETAILED

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LIST OF ABSORBANT MATERIALS. NOAA OFFERED AERIAL PHOTOS.

8. EMBOFF, EPA AND COAST GUARD AND NTSB REPS ATTENDED MEETING 1830 FRENCH NAVY. OIL THEN REPORTED AS FAR AS ROSCOFF. CONCERN EXPRESSED THAT THE SHIP WOULD BREAK. EMBOFF, EPA AND COAST GUARD REPS MET AT 2100 WITH AMOCO REPS WHO STRESSED THAT CAPTAIN BARBERI DID ALL REQUIRED BY LAW AND CUSTOM, ESPECIALLY ALERTING FRENCH AUTHORITIES TO PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED. THESE REPS MET TUESDAY AT TEN WITH DAVID USHER, PRESIDENT OF OIL SPILL CONTROL ASSOCIATION, WORKING FOR AMOCO. ALSO MET AT NOON WITH CIVIL DEFENSE AUTHORITIES AND VISITED SITE. FIVE TRUCKS OBSERVED PUMPING OIL BY

SMALL ESTUARY NEAR PORTSALL. COAST GUARD REP MET AT REQUEST CIVIL DEFENSE AUTHORITIES TO ADVISE ON CG PROCEDURES.

9. AS OF MORNING, MARCH 22, EXPERTS ESTIMATED 120,000 TONS PETROLEUM SPREAD ALONG 100 KILOMETERS FRENCH COAST IN BRITTANY FROM ROSCOFF WEST AND SOUTH TO PORTSALL.
HARTMAN

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Message Attributes

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Concepts: WATER POLLUTION, OIL SPILLS, AMOCO CADIZ M/V
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Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 22 mar 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
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Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
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SAS ID: 3238915
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: AMOCO CADIZ OIL SPILL
TAGS: SENV, FR
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/bb5bc1bf-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
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